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about the fires, David figured; and not a white man's face among them. They were all Indians—a lean, night-eyed, sinister-looking lot. He was conscious that they were scrutinizing him more than the girl. He could almost feel the prick of their eyes.

The girl passed swiftly into a hollow of gloom, calling softly to Tara. The bear followed her, a grotesque, slow-moving hulk, and David waited. He heard the clink of a chain. A moment later she returned to him.

"There is a light in Hauck's room," she said. "His council-room, he calls it—where he makes his bargains."

"I wonder why so many of the Indians are in? I did not know they were coming. It is the wrong time of year for—a crowd like that."

He felt the quiver in her voice. She was excited, he knew. And yet not about the Indians. She hoped that Hauck and Brokaw were in that room! She would confront them there, with him. That was it.

They paused at a door. Not a ray of light broke the gloom here. The stars in the sky seemed to make the blackness deeper. Her fingers tightened.

"You must be careful," he said, "and—remember."

"I will," she whispered.

IT was his last warning. The door opened slowly, and they entered a long, gloomy hall, illumined by a single oil lamp that sputtered and smoked in its bracket on the wall. The hall gave him an idea of the immensity of the building. The girl was shuddering.

"That is the way it has been—growing worse and worse since Nisikoo's died," she said. "In there those white men who come down from the north drink and gamble—and quarrel, always quarrel. This room is ours—Nisikoo's and mine." She touched with her hand a door near which they were standing. Then she pointed to another—there were half a dozen doors up and down the hall. "And that is Hauck's."

He threw off his pack and placed it on the floor, with his rifle across it. When he straightened, the girl was listening at the door to Hauck's room. Beckoning to him, she knocked on it lightly, and then opened it. David entered close behind her. In the light of the lamp sat two men. In his first glance he made up his mind which was Hauck and which was Brokaw. It was Brokaw, he thought, who was facing them as they entered—a man he could hate even if he had never heard of him before: big, loose-shouldered, a carnivorous-looking giant, with a mottled face and bleary eyes that had an amazed and watery stare in them.

Apparently the girl's knock had not been heard, for it was a moment before the other man swung slowly about in his chair so that he could see them. That was Hauck. David knew it. He was smaller than the other, with rounded, bullish shoulders, a thick neck, and eyes wherein might lurk an incredible cruelty.

David was surprised at the quiet and unemotional way in which the girl began speaking. She said that she had wandered over into the other valley and was lost, when this stranger found her. He had been good to her, and was on his way to the settlement on the coast. His name was—

She got no farther than that. Brokaw had taken his devouring gaze from her and was staring at David. He lurched suddenly to his feet and stretched out a hand. His voice was a bellow:

"McKenna!"

He was speaking directly at David—calling him by a name.

David opened his mouth to correct him, when a second thought occurred to him. The giant came around the table.

"Mac! God!—you don't mean to say you've forgotten—"

David took the hand.

"Brokaw!" he chanced.

The other's hand was as cold as a piece of beef, but it possessed a crushing strength. Hauck was staring from one to the other, and suddenly Brokaw turned to him, still pumping David's hand.

"McKenna—that young devil of Kicking Horse, Hauck! You've heard me speak of him. McKenna—"

The girl had backed to the door. She was pale. Her eyes were shining, and she was looking straight at David.

"Good night, Sakewawin!" she said.

It was very distinct, that word—Sakewawin! David had not before heard it come quite so clearly from her lips. There was something of defiance and pride in its utterance, an intentional and decisive emphasis of it. She smiled at him as she went through the door, and in that same breath Hauck had followed her. They disappeared.

When David turned he found Brokaw backed against the table, his two hands gripping the edge of it, his face distorted by passion.

"Sakewawin! What did she mean when she called you that?"

He made a step toward David, his hands clenched tighter and his whole bulk growing tense.

Sakewawin! A pretty name for himself, he had told the girl—and here it was raising the very devil with this drink-bloated colossus.

David guessed quickly. His mind worked like a race-horse. Sakewawin meant something that had enraged Brokaw: a jealous rage, a rage that filled his aqueous eyes with a lurid glare. So David said, looking into them calmly and with a feigned surprise:

"Wasn't she speaking to you, Brokaw?"

He watched the effect of his words on Brokaw.

"She was looking at you, Brokaw—straight at you when she said good night," he added.

"You sure—sure she said it to me, Mac?"

David nodded, even as his blood ran a little cold.

A leering grin of joy spread over Brokaw's face.

"The—the little devil!" he gloated.

"What does it mean?" David asked.

"Sakewawin? I've never heard it."

He lied calmly, turning his head a bit out of the light.

Brokaw stared at him a moment before answering.

"When a girl says that, it means—she belongs to you," he said. "In Indian it

means—possession. Dam'—of course you're right! She said it to me. She's mine. She belongs to me. I own her. And I thought—"

He caught up the bottle and turned out half a glass of liquor, swaying unsteadily.

"Drink, Mac?"

David shook his head.

"Not now. Let's go to your shack, if you've got one. Lots to talk about—old times—Kicking Horse, you know. And this girl? I can't believe it! If it's true you're a lucky dog."

HE was not thinking of consequences—of to-morrow. To-night was all he asked for—alone with Brokaw. That mountain of flesh, stupefied with liquor, was no match for him now. To-morrow he might hold the whip hand, if Hauck did not return too soon. "Lucky dog! Lucky dog!" He kept repeating that. It was like music in Brokaw's ears. And such a girl! An angel! He couldn't believe it!

Brokaw's face was like a red fire in his exultation. He drank the liquor he had proffered David, and drank again, rumbling in his thick chest like some animal. Of course she was an angel! Hadn't he and Hauck and that woman who had died made her grow into an angel—just for him? She belonged to him—always had belonged to him; and he had waited a long time. If she had ever called any other man that name—Sakewawin—he would have killed him. Certain. Killed him dead. This was the first time she had ever called him that. Lucky dog? You bet he was. They'd go to his shack—and talk.

He drank a third time. He rolled heavily as they entered the hall, David praying that they would not meet Hauck. He had his victim. He was sure of him. And the hall was empty. He picked up his gun and pack, and held to Brokaw's arm as they went out into the night.

Brokaw staggered guidingly into a wall of darkness, talking thickly about lucky dogs. They had gone perhaps a hundred paces when he stopped suddenly, very close to something that looked to David like a section of tall fence built of small trees. It was the cage. He jumped at that conclusion before he could see it very clearly in the clouded starlight. From it there came a growling rumble, a deep breath that was like air expelling itself from a bellows, and David saw faintly a huge, motionless shape beyond the stripped and upright sapling trunks.

"Grizzly," said Brokaw, trying to keep himself on an even balance. "Big bear fight to-morrow, Mac. My bear—her bear—great fight! Everybody come in to see it. Nothing like a bear fight, eh? S'prise her, won't it—pretty little wench!



"In his first glance David made up his mind which was Brokaw—big, loose-shouldered, with bleary eyes that had a watery stare in them."